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DC POLICE CHANNEL PLANS

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If you've spent any time at all scanning the District's police department, you probably experienced difficulty keeping up with the officers when they switch to alternate channels. Don't worry, the officers experience the same confusion!

It started during the 1980's when the department purchased synthesized Motorola MX340-S radios -- many of which are still in use. The department's MX has four banks of 12 channels each and was quite a change from the former crystal radios. A few years after the MX, the Saber II brought along a new channel plan and more change. The department converted 460.45 to the tac channel for the 4th and 5th districts, and the tac channels were designated as Tac-1 (460.1), Tac-2 (460.4) and Tac-3 (460.45). Then the confusion started. And to make matters worse, a couple years ago the department added digital capable Astro Sabers (and a third channel line-up) to supplement its existing portable radio inventory.

When a couple of officers switch to "tac," it's not uncommon to discover each of them switching to different channels. As a general rule of thumb, when officers refer to a channel by number only (no letter), it's probably a channel in the Saber. Channels for the MX340-S are often referred to by zone letter and channel number, as in "A-11" for SOD.

Channel plans are as follows:
(CW1=Citywide 1)

MX340-S

CH# Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D
1 1D	TAC-2	TAC-2	1D-SURV
2 2D	TAC-1	TAC-1	2D-SURV
3 3D	TAC-1	TAC-1	3D-SURV
4 4D	TAC-1	TAC-1	4D-SURV
5 5D	TAC-1	TAC-1	5D-SURV
6 6D	TAC-2	TAC-2	6D-SURV
7 7D	TAC-2	TAC-2	7D-SURV
8 TAC-3	TAC-2	TAC-2	Empty
9 Command			
	Empty	Empty	CID-SURV
10 Empty	Empty	Empty	CID-SURV
11 SOD	SOD	SOD	SOD-SURV
12 CW-1	CW-1	CW-1	CW-1

Channels 1 to 8 of zone C in MX340-S radios are repeater talkaround (simplex). Note that the 4th and 5th patrol districts now use Tac-3 (no longer Tac-1) as their tac channel. Most patrol officer radios have just their district's surveillance channel and no other surveillance channel. The command channel is in selected radios only.

Saber II

CH# A	B	C	D	E	F
1 1D	1D	1D	SOD	SOD	SOD
2 2D	2D	2D	Blank	Blank	Blank
3 3D	3D	3D	Blank	Blank	Blank
4 4D	4D	4D	Blank	Blank	Blank
5 5D	5D	5D	TAC-1	TAC-1	TAC-1
6 6D	6D	6D	TAC-2	TAC-2	TAC-2
7 7D	7D	7D	TAC-3	TAC-3	TAC-3
8 TAC1	TAC2	TAC-3	D-F are CW-SURV1		
9 SURV	SURV	SURV	D-F are CW-SURV2		
10 All Command					
11 All SOD					
12 All CW-1					

The surveillance channel of the patrol district to which the Saber II radio is assigned is programmed into channel 9 of zones A, B and C. CID and SOD surveillance channels (458.35, 458.7 and 465.0) are programmed into some radios (apparently in channels 2, 3 and 4 of zones D, E and F). The command channel is programmed in selected radios only.

Astro Saber II (just one zone!)

1 1D
2 2D
3 3D
4 4D
5 5D
6 6D
7 7D
8 TAC1
9 TAC2
10 TAC3
11 SURV
12 CW-SURV1
13 CW-SURV2
14 COMMAND
15 SOD
16 CW-1

Talkaround in Astros is permitted on the district channel to which the radio is assigned and is selected using a repeater/direct switch (this talkaround

channel is known as the "B channel"). Channel 11 is the surveillance channel of the patrol district to which the radio is assigned. The command channel is programmed in selected radios only.

Midland

The Midland mobile radio is the only other radio commonly used by DC police. The department recently made a commitment to install mobile radios into scout cars which previously had only a portable radio with convertacom. The goal is to have both a working portable and mobile radio in each patrol car. The Midland radios appear to have the same channel plan throughout the city. As with the other radios, the command channel is in selected radios only.

Midland Mobile

Ch#	Zone
1	1st District
2	2nd District
3	3rd District
4	4th District
5	5th District
6	6th District
7	7th District
8	Tac 3
9	Tac 1
10	Tac 2
11	SOD
12	Citywide 1
13	Command

Repeated Channels

460.3500r 1st District
460.2500r 2nd District
460.0250r 3rd District
460.5000r 4th District
460.2000r 5th District
460.1500r 6th District
460.4750r 7th District
460.1000r Tac-1 (2nd & 3rd Districts)
460.4000r Tac-2 (1st, 6th, and 7th Districts)
460.4500r Tac-3 (4th and 5th Distr.)
460.4250r Command
460.2750r Special Operations Div.
460.3250r Citywide-1 (CW-1)

Non-Repeated Surveillance Channels

458.7750s 1st District
458.7250s 2nd District
458.4750s 3rd District
458.3750s 4th District
458.2000s 5th District
458.4250s 6th District
458.8500s 7th District
458.3500s Criminal Investigations Division (CID) "D-9"
458.7000s Criminal Investigations Division (CID) "D-10"
465.0000s Special Operations Division (SOD)
453.3125s Citywide Surveillance-1 (CW-SURV1)
458.3125s Citywide Surveillance-2 (CW-SURV2)

MONTGOMERY ORDERS DIGITAL TRUNKED SYSTEM

by Alan Henney
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On May 6, Montgomery County officially issued a request for proposals for a county-wide simulcast fully digital 800 MHz trunked radio system which is intended to serve county and local agencies in the 500 square mile county for the next 20 years.

The specifications are stringent. "The system," states the 3 pound proposal, "shall provide 95 percent reliable portable radio coverage in every building within the county with penetration losses of 6 dB in rural areas, 12 dB in suburban areas; and 18 dB in urban, commercial and industrial areas."

Furthermore, the county adds that the system shall provide 90 percent reliable coverage inside buildings up to three miles outside the county in all directions with a maximum penetration loss of 6 dB. These specifications assume the antenna will be at hip level -- not shoulder level as many other proposals commonly specify. Mobile radios are expected to cover an additional five miles beyond portable radio coverage.

The trunked radio system backbone architecture will be fully compliant with APCO Project 16 for public safety systems and provide improved spectrum efficiency (via 12.5 KHz bandwidth operation), digital modulation, and enhanced audio quality. It will employ a transfer rate of 9600 bits per second using either FDMA or TDMA digital technology. In addition, it must support conventional repeater and talkaround communication in both analog FM and digital formats. The trunked system will interface with the county's planned fiber-optic system infrastructure.

The county estimates the system will consist of approximately 250 talkgroups -- 25 of which must be encryption capable. Proposed system users include the police, fire & rescue, sheriff, corrections, public works & transportation, information systems, etc. In addition, police agencies in Rockville, Gaithersburg, Takoma Park and Chevy Chase Village will likely participate. The contract calls for approximately 2150 portables and 2400 mobile radios.

The county has prepared a list of recommended antenna sites and the

inch-thick proposal says the objective of the county is not to add any additional sites and/or higher towers to support this radio system. "These county-controlled sites and existing tower locations are strongly preferred, but are recognized as possibly being inadequate in number and quality to meet requirements," warns the proposal.

The contractor is required to meet coverage reliability requirements. The most critical aspects for site selection are its ability to meet system requirements, meet community concerns for appearance and safety, physical security and integrity, backup power and other physical requirements, and lowest possible cost (in that order).

The Ride-On bus system, the public schools, county detention center, and a proposed mobile data network will not operate on the trunked system, but provisions will likely be made for interoperability. The county detention center will continue to operate on 494.8125. Patches will enable trunked system users to communicate on fire and police mutual aid channels (154.28, 154.295 and 453.55) as well as the national 800 MHz mutual aid calling channel (866.0125). One of the four 800 MHz mutual aid tactical channels (866.5125, 867.0125, 867.5125 and 868.0125) will provide wide-area mobile coverage. A second will allow county-wide communication above ground and in metro tunnels.

Conventional base stations will allow the trunked system to patch with the county schools (which may upgrade to its own trunked system), Howard County police, Loudoun County Sheriff, Maryland Park Police and Maryland State Police -- on their own frequencies. Hospitals will receive control stations for coordination purposes and already have the capability of operating on the hospital emergency network repeater (868.5125).

The fire department plans to continue to simulcast dispatch operations on and use 154.16 for the voice alerting system. "Volunteer firefighters," states the proposal, "have invested significant personal resources into the capability to monitor county VHF fire channels. It is important that this capability be supported by the new system." The VHF system will simulcast all communication activity (dispatcher and field units) from the new fire dispatch talkgroup (an option will allow the dispatcher to patch VHF users to the trunked system as required).

A new fire & rescue station/personnel alerting system is included as part of the proposal. The county desires to employ an alerting system which will provide the functions of personnel alerting and fire station alerting as a single integrated system controlled by the CAD system. But the MODAT vehicle status reporting system will remain on 154.355.

The county would like to improve its alphanumeric messaging capabilities. The county desires the contractor to negotiate a priority-based solution with a commercial paging company, which will transmit the dispatch message to field-worn alphanumeric pagers in less than 45 seconds (guaranteed). A direct CAD-to-commercial paging service computer interface; or a county-owned and operated alphanumeric paging system are mentioned as possibilities. Offerors are also encouraged to consider proposing a paging system which provides reliable fire station and personnel alerting through use of an alphanumeric paging system with interfaces to external alerting devices (relays) and printers.

The county is in the process of developing specifications for a mobile data system which will serve various agencies in and around Montgomery County. The system will most likely initially employ a high-speed data infrastructure on 853.6625 and 854.9625 with future expansion to four or more 800 MHz channels or possibly in the 489 MHz band. The trunked radio system, however, will still be capable of supporting mobile data terminals by means of direct interface without requiring a separate RF modem.

The mobile data user interface will consist of lap-top computers with the system used initially for CAD-based dispatch, MVA, local warrant, and NCIC checks, report generation and submission, and ultimately NCIC-2000 support. The mobile data system will be procured under a separate contract.

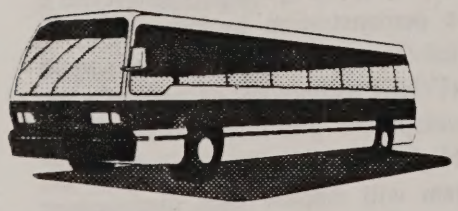
A new transit & traffic management radio system is also being procured under a separate solicitation for the Ride-On bus system. This project is a demonstration project employing Intelligent Vehicle-Highway Systems (IVHS) technology as part of a development grant from the Federal Highway Administration. This system will employ fleet management systems which use automatic vehicle location (AVL) through GPS receivers. The county plans to upgrade the transit radio system to support data communications, transit fleet management and AVL.

The system's 20 trunked channels are already licensed. Frequencies are as follows:

866.2125, 866.3375, 866.4875, 866.65, 867.8375, 867.8875 (replaced 866.8875), 867.9125 (replaced 867.325), 868.1125, 868.1625 (replaced 867.35), 868.1875 (replaced 867.4625), 868.275, 868.3625, 868.3875, 868.4375, 868.6125, 868.6375, 868.6875, 868.8625, 868.8875 and 868.9375.

Mobile and control stations transmit 45 MHz lower. The vendor will be responsible for finding at least five more frequencies for low-power talkaround communication. Telephone interconnect will be limited to two countywide trunked channels with capacity for future expansion of up to three.

A study by RAM Communications Consultants in March of 1994 estimated the system, without including mobile data, AVL or Ride-On, would cost $30.5 million. The proposed mobile data system was estimated at $6 million. Contract execution is expected during mid-December and the county anticipates it will take approximately two years from that date to final system acceptance.



PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY STILL SERIOUS ABOUT TRUNKING

by Willard Hardman
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Information obtained from Prince William County Capital Improvements Program documents indicate that money has been allocated for design of a new public safety communications system in FY98. Construction is scheduled during FY98 and 99, and outfitting in FY99. So we are looking at a probable implementation for just the public safety section during late 1999 or early 2000 -- assuming all goes as planned. "The timing of the construction of the infrastructure for this project has been delayed from the FY1997-2002 Capital Improvements program (CIP) due to time needed for further citizen and staff review and possible redesign..."

The project's total budget is $15,742,214. "The cost of this project has been reduced from the FY 1997-2002 CIP due to a combination of factors including: removal of the non-public safety agencies from this project, redesign, potential additional construction and a revising of the cost of radios since the project inception."

There is no projected operating costs for the system until FY99. The police MODAT portion is scheduled to go on-line in FY99 followed by fire in FY00. The non-public safety portion will not be outfitted until FY00 at the earliest and includes schools, park authority, service authority, public works, sheriff and the adult detention center.

GOLF ANYONE?

by Ralph Johnson
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The Kemper Open golf tournament was a prolific source for frequency collection. Radio users at the tournament included the grounds crews, caterers, games schedulers, personnel on the course who passed times and scores, medics, media, local police and golf course security personnel. All had a need to communicate and that means they probably need radios and perhaps a cell phone!

I set out to see what I could monitor and, despite the limited time I had, managed to monitor a number of frequencies. I concentrated on the logistics of the tournament rather than monitoring the media.

I used five radios to monitor the tournament, two Uniden Bearcat 700A scanners, a 2 meter/440 MHz Alinco amateur transceiver (actually two radios in one), a Realistic 154.6 MHz business transceiver and a Radio Shack Pro-26 scanner. And sometimes, when passing near a possible RF source, I utilized my Radio Shack frequency counter to monitor the airwaves.

I used a number of antennas to collect the signals, 2 meter, 450 MHz and 900 MHz J-pole antennas and three 2 meter/440 MHz magnetic-mount antennas on my car.

My monitoring point was in Avenel Park (ADC map 34-E-F9), located on a slight knoll adjacent to the golf course. I parked my car where I could use the terrain to obtain the best reception and I could place the antenna bases for the J-poles in the ground. To match the band I was scanning I manually switched the antenna connections.

Operationally, I devoted three radios to specific frequencies and two to scanning. The 154.600, of course, could not monitor any other frequency so it monitored the grounds crew. One of the Uniden scanners primarily monitored Montgomery County police channel 6 (495.3625). I utilized the split scan capability of my 2 meter/440 MHz transceiver to simultaneously monitor VHF and UHF frequencies I confirmed that were used by the tournament.

The other Uniden scanner and my Pro-26 were used to find frequencies used by the tournament. I used the Uniden scanner as a rough band scanner, since it could not be set to scan frequencies as the Pro-26 can. I did catch a couple of frequencies with it, though. Simultaneously, or after I got a possible hit from the Uniden, I would monitor that frequency with the Pro-26 to verify if that frequency were applicable to the tournament. I also used the Pro-26 to concentrate on particular frequency sections for use. When I confirmed a frequency, I would enter it into either the other Uniden scanner or the Alinco transceiver where I could monitor that frequency.

Thanks to some priming from Alan on frequencies to start monitoring I was able to immediately start listening. From those frequencies I expanded out to search other regions and was fairly successful.

Montgomery County EMS providers operated on the US&R (Urban Search & Rescue) FEMA channels. The FEMA frequencies appear below in the 406-420 MHz band, they are a mix of inputs, outputs and simplex channels. Does anyone know the channel plan for these radios? Here are the other frequencies I found that were used at the tournament.

151.5050 General
151.6250 Primary administration frequency (channel 1)
151.9250 Secondary administration frequency
151.9550 Traffic radio
154.5700 Confirmed but not used very much
154.6000 Grounds crew personnel
408.4000 EMS (FEMA US&R)
417.6000 EMS (FEMA US&R)
418.0500 EMS (FEMA US&R)
418.0750 EMS (FEMA US&R)
418.5750 EMS (FEMA US&R)
461.6625 Score passing
464.3250 Catering
464.4875 General
464.5500 General
464.6750 Logistics
464.7000 General
466.8000 Score passing
495.3625 Mont. Co. PD Ch. 6

The best frequency for net control I monitored was the catering frequency. Because all locations had to have sufficient food and drinks, the central location maintained control and would poll the outer areas to see if they needed drinks or food. I did not catch the frequency used by the club security. 151.505 is a good possibility but when I monitored security incident reports on other frequencies, this frequency did not come alive.

At the intersection of Persimmon Tree and Country Club, the Montgomery County Police set up a large "modular housing" unit as a command post for the Kemper and the U.S. Open at the nearby Congressional Country Club. I noticed two temporary vertical antennas for their command frequencies set up adjacent to the trailer. As I drove past one day, there were approximately 20 cruisers parked along Country Club.

Difficulties exist at the U.S. Open that I didn't have at the Kemper. There are no parks adjacent to Congressional Country Club. The Montgomery County Police placed millions of NO PARKING signs around the area so I couldn't pull off the road. A church parking lot had additional NO PARKING signs. In short, there appears there isn't a convenient location to monitor from. Avenel Park is not good because of a hill between the park and Congressional Country Club.

MONTGOMERY POLICE MAKE CHANGES

In case you have not already noticed, Montgomery County police channel 3 (494.9125) is now simulcast with channel 8 (495.4125). Ray Chin says this was done to fill in the dead

spots near the upper parts of the Silver Spring police district (around the Good Hope Road area). It is also possible that the Rockville district may soon simulcast on two channels to fill in its dead spots. Borders for the five patrol districts may be realigned this summer, Ray adds. The new Germantown "Ocean" units, by the way, are community policing units. They respond to assist the primary patrols (Mary/Nancy beats) as needed.

MYSTERY FREQUENCIES

Steve Rigby and several other scanner listeners have reported hearing unusual activity on 411.975 and 412.350. For a couple of weeks, we monitored some heavily accented foreign voices speaking mostly English with references to an ambassador and motorcades. The voice traffic was often distorted, and we have not monitored any conversations recently.

However, both frequencies often carry tones, usually about six or so, each about a quarter of a second in length and about the same apart. The tones are about 1 KHz in pitch, and can apparently be overridden by a voice communication if occurring as a voice transmission is initiated. We've encountered similar tones on 165.6875 (Secret Service field office) and 165.2375, CTCSS 100.0 (US Customs). The tones often end with what sounds like a computer handshake. The signal for 411.975 appears to originate from downtown Washington.

Larry Van Horn says his records indicate that FEMA is the user of both frequencies. Both are reported to be the repeater outputs for a FEMA security net in the area devoted to special couriers. (But be careful of this because FEMA often carries frequencies actually used by "other" agencies, and the next closest location is Winchester, VA - Hmmmm). Note also that no one has reported hearing anytthing on the alleged inputs.

411.975 (408.725 in) KPS275
Washington, DC FEMA HQ
412.350 (408.775 in) KPS262
Winchester, VA FEMA
special site

JOB OPENING! The Secret Service is looking for technicians to design and install radio systems. Contact Jeff Brewer (202-435-5566) for details.

NEWSSCAN

RISKY LIFE FOR MEXICAN PHOTOGRAPHER.

His fellow reporters in Ciudad Jurez, Mexico call him "La Pantera" (The Panther). Like a latter-day Weegee, writes the May 10 Independent, Rafael Cota cruises the city at night with a police radio scanner and a video camera, specializing in shooting footage of violent crime scenes. Every morning, he broadcasts a blood-drenched selection of the various murders, maiming and traffic fatalities from the night before, on a popular local TV news show called "While You Were Sleeping."

Juarez, just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas, is now one of the most violent, lawless cities on the American continent, and Cota is seldom short of material. He works 12 hours a night, six days a week, for a total of $75. This 3700-word essay is a must-read for anyone interested in "buffing."

SCANNING THE STREETS OF MEXICO CITY.

Armed only with cameras and a scanner, a team of four reporters from assorted newspapers, known as "Los Onces" (The Elevens), cruise the dark streets of Mexico City. These men are photojournalism's strike force, hard-core veterans who relish living on the edge.

Every night of the week, writes the April 17 Copley News Service, they race from bullet-riddled bodies to burned-out houses, from fatal auto accidents to bloody stabbings to get gruesome photos of murder and mayhem for the next day's editions of their newspapers. They represent a cross-section of Mexico City journalism, from respected dailies to alarmist tabloids.

On the street, the differences between their newspapers dissolve. The photographers have one purpose: get their photos into the paper; scoop the competition; and beat the ever-present deadline. But unlike other photographers who simply record tragedies, this four-man team gets involved. "If we get there before the paramedics, we help the victims," one of them says. "One time we left our cameras on the ground and lifted a concrete post so the person would not be crushed to death." They are called "The Elevens" for the Red Cross radio code for newspaper photographers.

BANGKOK'S VOYEURS SCAN TO THE RESCUE.
Part rescue team, part forensic officers, part macho speed demons, Po Teck Teung teams, along with those from a rival organization, Ruam Katanyu, cruise Bangkok at night in low-slung, modified pick-up trucks in search of car wrecks and other disasters. Those found living are rushed to hospital in the back of the pick-ups, and are very grateful, reports the April 12 Financial Times Limited, as the city's emergency services could not cope without the charitable assistance.

But, with ears tuned to their police radio scanners and circling the city like scavengers with cameras, the Po Teck Teung teams are also looking for death. Pictures of dead bodies litter television programs and newspapers. There are magazines, such as 191 (named after the emergency telephone number), devoted entirely to publishing pictures of people who have died a violent death.

There is even a popular Thai expression "Thai Moong" --literally "Thai people look" --to describe the group of people who inevitably gather at the scene of a disaster. These days the voyeurs have plenty to look at. Road accidents killed two people every hour in 1996, according to Thailand's Ministry of Public Health.

POLICE RADAR JAMMERS MAY NOT WORK AS CLAIMED.
A Texas testing lab, the Fort Worth based Speed Labs, mounted the anti-radar equipment in cars on a desert road outside El Paso, Texas. Drivers then drove the vehicles towards testing personnel with laser or radar guns that used the three bands police use, X, K and Ka. The Feb. 23 San Antonio Express-News reported that of the twelve anti-radar jamming units tested, some were extremely effective, others worked on some bands while others were judged ineffective.

One, the Laser Defuser was reported to be extremely effective while a combination laser-radar jammer was judged ineffective. Some were semi-effective and three other units were effective on some bands but not others. Four others did not work at all. One unit would only disable the radar for about five seconds but the company representative felt that would be enough warning time for the motorist to slow down. A manufacturer of laser guns said "that might keep you from getting a ticket at 90. But you're going to get a ticket at 85."

The sum of the article is that a person who buys a jammer will have to check it out before they purchase such a device, which in most cases is illegal to start with.

MAYOR HANGS UP ON HIGH CELLULAR PHONE BILLS. The mayor of North Providence, RI pulled in 13 of the 31 cellular telephones used by the town work force, a move that is expected to save taxpayers more than $2,000 each month. A review of the most recently available cellular phone bills, from December 1996, showed employee cellular phone calls exceeding $4,400 a month. The town also left Bell Atlantic NYNEX for a less expensive plan offered by Cellular One, says the April 30 Providence Journal-Bulletin.

REMEMBER JOHN AND ALICE MARTIN? The Florida couple plead guilty to charges of illegally taping a cellular telephone call involving House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other Republican leaders and were each fined $500. The Atlanta Journal and Constitution reported that the couple was charged with violating the Electronic Communications Privacy Act by using a scanner to intercept the radio portion of a cellular conversation and could have been fined up to $5,000. The Martins were charged with an infraction, which is less serious than a misdemeanor.

The Martins will escape jail time with their plea, but federal investigators still are looking into how their tape of the conversation got leaked to the press after the couple turned it over to Rep. Jim McDermott. The couple, who live in a mobile home on a dirt road, have almost no savings, and their debts consume all their income, said their attorney, Robert Griscti of Gainesville. But they have refused several offers to buy their story, he said.

HOOKERS HACK POLICE MESSAGING SYSTEM.
For nearly a year, some Houston wrecker drivers have been monitoring transmissions sent from the portable computers installed in many Houston Police Department cars. Those who can afford the technology can see where police might need them and beat the competition to the site, writes the April 4 Houston Chronicle.

Houston police chief said he is concerned, since the mobile computers are often used to relay sensitive information. Attorneys for the wrecker drivers and the city have found the practice legal, but HPD and the Harris County district attorney's office convinced a state representative to file legislation to outlaw it.

Until and unless that legislation becomes law, wrecker drivers will continue to use the monitoring devices

as another tool in their trade, said the president of the Texas Towing and Storage Association. "We've been monitoring police radios for years," said another towing operator, calling monitoring the signals from the portable computers "pretty much the same thing." Wrecker drivers wearing the small pager-like device can see where calls are occurring even if they have to leave their trucks, where most have police radio scanners mounted [sounds more like an alpha paging system?].

SPECTRUM AUCTION LETDOWN.
Congress had expected the FCC to pull in about $1.8 billion in its latest auction of a slice of the airwaves, this one for companies that want to offer wireless voice and data services. But when the bidding stopped, reported the April 26 Washington Post, the FCC found it had raised less than 1 percent of that amount, only $13.6 million.

In other bidding since the program began in July 1994, winners have pledged about $23 billion to the Treasury Department. The FCC blamed the poor showing on Congress, saying it didn't give the agency or the industry enough time to prepare for the auction. But the low bids also might be a sign that the market for airwave licenses is becoming glutted, some analysts claim. Either way, bargain-basement prices awaited the handful of communications companies that cared to participate. McLeod Inc. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, actually bid $1 for each of four licenses in the Midwest covering areas with a 15 million population --and won. Nobody countered its bid in 29 rounds.

MORE SUMMER BIKE PATROLS! Fort Myer and Fort McNair have each added bike patrols, says the May 16 Pentagram. The officers peddle mountain bikes that are painted black with the word "Police" stenciled on them and are equipped with sirens, flashing lights and mobile radar guns!

COULD MAJOR CHANGES BE IN STORE FOR DC POLICE? During May, D.C. Police Chief Larry D. Soulsby announced plans to move about 500 officers from desk jobs and specialty units at headquarters to street patrols, part of a broader plan that also would reshape boundaries for police districts. According to the May 20 Washington Post, Soulsby said he will also "try to develop team accountability" and eliminate the 138 scout-car beats and replace them with 80 "service areas." One sergeant will have overall responsibility for each service area and will be the "point of contact" for the community. Each area will have at least one detective and one vice officer. All officers will remain assigned to the service area for at least a year.

The chief also plans to redraw police district boundaries to equalize the workload in each district, a move that requires D.C. Council approval. The June 9 Washington Post reported that the D.C. Council introduced emergency legislation that striped Soulsby of the authority to change police district boundaries. Ten of the 12 council members voted for it. Despite the council legislation, Soulsby said he was going ahead with the boundary changes but would phase them in more slowly than originally scheduled. Because the emergency legislation won't take effect for at least 30 days, he is legally free to proceed.

SWAT TEAM MANIA! Critics view the growing role of heavily armed police units as "militarization" of law enforcement as an exploding number of SWAT teams take to the country's streets. According to the June 17 Washington Post, "the explosive growth and expanding mission of SWAT teams has, in turn, led to complaints that an occupying army is marching through America's streets --that they are too aggressive, too heavily armed, too scary --and that they erode the public's perception of police as public servants."

Police researcher Peter Kraska and his colleagues have documented the explosive growth of SWAT in a recent study. In a nationwide survey of 690 law enforcement agencies serving cities with populations with 50,000 or more, the researchers found that 90 percent now have active SWAT teams, compared with 60 percent in the early 1980s. Even in rural communities and smaller cities, the researchers have found that two of every three departments now boast a SWAT team --a phenomenon Kraska calls "militarizing Mayberry."

The SWAT mission has expanded. Once limited to highly specialized actions, such as dealing with barricaded gunmen or hostage-takers, SWAT teams are now increasingly engaged in more standard police work. There is a boom in "high risk warrant work," including "no-knock entries." The work is mostly related to the war on drugs, and by extension, gang suppression. "Where the SWAT teams were once deployed a few times a year, they are now used for all kinds of police work --dozens of calls, hundreds of calls a year," said Kraska, a professor of police studies at Western Kentucky Univer-

sity. "In SWAT units formed since 1980, their use has increased by 538 percent."

Some units, like those in Fresno, California are being deployed full time as roaming patrols. Fresno's Violent Crime Suppression Unit now patrols crime-ridden neighborhoods day and night, serving warrants, stopping vehicles, interrogating gang members and showing a presence. As they move through the city of 400,000 people, they wear subdued gray-and-black urban camouflage and body armor, and have at the ready ballistic shields and helmets, M17 gas masks and rappelling gear, battering rams, diversionary devices known as "flashbangs," pepper spray and tear gas, and specialized guns, including assault rifles and, most famously, the Heckler and Koch MP5, the short, highly accurate 9mm, fully automatic submachine gun used by the Navy Seals. More equipment is carried in a mobile command SWAT bus that roves the city and an armored personnel carrier is on order.

Critics warn that the growing use of paramilitary-style police units threatens the very idea of a civilian police force --just as many law enforcement authorities begin to apply community policing. Between 1980 and 1995 Kraska found that SWAT units were employed in their traditional roles only for a minority of call-outs. Some 1.3 percent of their work was to quell civil disturbances; 3.6 percent for hostage situations; 13.4 percent for barricaded individuals. But 75 percent of their mission is now devoted to serve high-risk warrants, mostly drug raids.

Speaking of SWAT teams, more than 25 of them competed at the 9th Annual Prince William County competition at Quantico Marine Base during May. The Alexandria team, reports the May 16 Pentagram, won the championship.

Ralph Johnson and Willard Hardman contributed to this issue's NewsScan. Contact Alan for the full text of any NewsScan article. Please submit articles that may be of interest.

Please address all correspondence to Alan. We encourage readers to submit material and write articles that relate to the hobby. All submissions are subject to editing for style and content. When submitting material please make certain we have your phone number should we have any questions. We welcome frequency and visitor requests, but please include a reply envelope.

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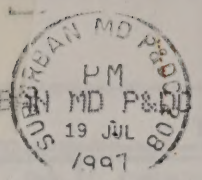

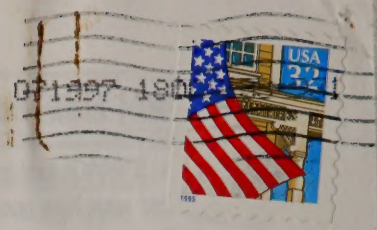

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